

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 6013

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN JOURNALIST AT NATO DPC MINISTERIAL

SUMMARY: EXCLUSION OF EGYPTIAN JOURNALIST FROM U.S. BRIEFING
AT NATO DPC MINISTERIAL RESULTED IN THREAT OF REPRISALS AGAINST U.S.
JOURNALSITS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RECENT MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, SOME FOREIGN JOURNALSITS HAVE
BEEN ADMITTED TO BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS BY SECRETARIES OF STATE AND
DEFENSE AND THEIR SPOKESMEN. WHERE IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO INCLUDE

ENTIRE PRESS CORPS, SELECTIVE INVITATIONS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO
JOURNALISTS KNOWN TO MISSION OFFICERS TO BE RELIABLE RE GROUND RULES
AND TO HAVE DISPLAYED CONSISTENT INTEREST IN U.S. POSITION ON
ON NATO QUESTIONS AND ON
BASIS OF LIST APPROVED BY RESPECTIVE SECRETARY'S PRESS SPOKES-
MEN. ANY TEMPORARY UNHAPPINESS ON THE PART OF INDIVIDUAL JOURNALISTS
WHO HAVE HAD TO BE EXCLUDED ON THIS BASIS HAS BEEN DISPELLED BY
OUR DAILY AVAILABILITY TO THEM, GIVING THEN AN OPPORTUNITY
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TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIP PERMITTING INVITATIONS TO BRIEFINGS AT
SUBSEQUENT MINISTERIAL MEETINGS.

2. TO OPERATE THIS SYSTEM AT THIS DPC MEETING, USNATO PUBLIC

AFFAIRS ADVISOR SUBMITTED LIST OF JOURNALISTS TO ASD/PA FRIENDHEIM.
AFTER CHANGES, LIST WAS APPROVED AND INVITATIONS TO ATTEND
SECDEF BACKGROUNDER WERE ISSUED ONLY TO JOURNALISTS ON LIST.

3. IN DECEMBER 7 SECDEF BACKGROUNDER, A.L. SHALASA OF LE JOURNAL
D'EGYPTE (PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN TO US), WAS ALONG WITH MANY OTHER
JOURNALISTS, EXCLUDED ON THIS BASIS. WE SOUGHT HIM OUT FOLLOWING
BACKGROUNDER TO REPEAT EXPLANATION OF SYSTEM AND EXTENDED OFFER
OF FUTURE CONTACTS. HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN "BIG
EVENTS" AND, THEREFORE, WOULD NOT BE IN ANY REGULAR CONTACT WITH US.
BUT HE SAID THAT HE SHOULD BE ADMITTED BEACUSE IF HE WAS NOT
REPRISALS WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST U.S. JOURNALISTS IN EGYPT.
WE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT OUR FRIENDLY OFFER WAS THUS RECEIVED.

4. SHALASA'S MANNER THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION WAS QUIET AND CALM.
HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD EXPECTED TO BE EXCLUDED. SHALASA
FIRST CAME TO OUR ATTENTION ON DECEMBER 6 WHEN, IN SECRETARY GENERAL
LUNS' OPEN PRESS CONFERENCE, HE HAD ASKED FOLLOWING QUESTION: "HOW
DO YOU FEEL ABOUT AMERICAN PLANS TO SIEZE ARAB OIL FIELDS?"

5. DESPITE THIS DIFFICULTY, WE BELIEVE THAT PRESENT POLICY IS ONLY
SERVICEABLE MEANS OF INCLUSION OF SOME FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN
RESTRICTED U.S. BRIEFINGS.
RUMSFELD.

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